

2016

# Navy League of Canada Communications Guidelines for Branch, Division and Members

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**Purpose:**

The Navy League of Canada is committed to achieving the greatest positive profile and informing, educating and engaging key audiences about the programs of the Navy League of Canada. This includes opportunities through the Maritime Affairs activities, youth training through the Sea Cadet and Navy League cadet programs and the Scholarship programs.

The media is frequently interested in Navy League activities, especially at the local level. We should be open and responsive to their requests because they are amongst the many ways to get our program information to our targeted audiences.

These guidelines are intended to facilitate communication between the Navy League of Canada—including the Branch and Division Level—and various media outlets throughout the country. The Royal Canadian Sea Cadet and Navy League Cadet programs are great youth activities, and whenever there is an opportunity to promote the program with the media, every occasion should be taken.

**Aims:**

- 1) To assist individual representatives of the Navy League to know when to engage the media, and when to advise a higher level authority of media requests.
- 2) To ensure the right level of the organization is communicating with the media.
- 3) To promote the good reputation and awareness of the Navy League programs.

**Scope:**

The scope of this guideline is designed to include all current aspects of media, including but not limited to:

- a) Face to face interviews
- b) Written answers to questions
- c) Social media interactions
- d) Phone interviews

**General Guidelines:**

- 1) Any individual within the Navy League of Canada may speak with members of the media when the subject of the discussion relates specifically to their work within the League but this should first be cleared through the Branch/Division President to make sure that the person with the most appropriate and up to date information speaks on behalf of the League.

Do not say you are not allowed to talk to a reporter or have to get permission to do so. Instead, tell the reporter “the Navy League Policy is to refer all media inquires to our President to ensure the media is provided with the most current information.

- 2) When Cadet Corps are doing a fun, interesting activity, the local Branch should engage the local media to report on the activity.
- 3) When the subject of the media interaction is negative, it should likely be raised to a higher level, subject to the seriousness of the issue in question.
- 4) At no time should any member of the League engage a national media outlet to discuss issues prior to receiving authorization from the National President of the Navy League
- 5) Any questions arising about Sea Cadets should be directed to the appropriate military Public Affairs Officer for your area.
- 6) If ever in any doubt, refer the question to the Division or National Level.
- 7) Written communications need to follow “a branded” League format so as to ensure there is continuity in the use of letter head, format and logos etc. The National Office can provide templates upon request.

### **Examples:**

- a) A reporter asks a question about how tag day works:
  - i. The question is brought to the attention of the local Branch, and they should be the ones to answer.
- b) A local reporter asks about how a new provincial law will affect the cadet program:
  - i. The question should be forwarded to the Division to respond to.
- c) A news story breaks about a serious incident at a summer training centre:
  - i. The National Office should be contacted to be informed and no further interaction at the local level should take place.
- d) A question is asked relating to a national policy:
  - i. If the question is about Sea Cadets, refer them to the Military Public Affairs Officer for your Region.
  - ii. If the question is about Navy League Cadets, refer the question to the National Office of the Navy League of Canada.

### **Media Response Lines:**

When an issue of provincial or national significance arises, Media Response Lines (MRLs) will be drafted by the National Office and approved by the National President. Those MRLs will be used as the basis when answering any questions from the media. The same process will be followed when addressing internal communications as well.

In most circumstances, it should only be 1 person who will interact with the media once MRLs are drafted. This is in order to keep a consistent delivery in messaging.

**Protocols and Courtesies:**

Any member of the Navy League that interfaces with the media will adhere to common protocols and courtesies. This pertains to the use of official titles for those who hold office and the use of proper ranks for those serving and retired members of the military.

Members of the media should be treated with courtesy and provided with accurate and timely responses bearing in mind their need to meet publication deadlines.

**Response to National Queries:**

At no time should any representative of the Navy League respond to a national query without first receiving the authorization from the National President. In order to maintain consistent messaging, any and all communications that are released to a wide audience—either internal or external—are to be drafted by the National Office and approved by the National President.

**General:**

When engaging the media in a private capacity, Navy League officials must not imply that the Navy League endorses or supports their opinions and activities. They must take steps to ensure that media are clear that they are acting in a private capacity.